

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, May 27, 1999, at 2 p.m. to hold a hearing.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR AND PENSIONS

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be authorized to meet for a hearing on "Reauthorization for the National Endowments of the Arts and Humanities" during the session of the Senate on Thursday, May 27, 1999, at 10 a.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AGING

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, Subcommittee on Aging be authorized to meet for a hearing on "Older Americans Act" during the session of the Senate on Thursday, May 27, 1999, at 2:30 p.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EAST ASIA AND PACIFIC AFFAIRS

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, May 27, 1999, at 10 a.m. to hold a hearing.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON FISHERIES, WILDLIFE, AND DRINKING WATER

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, and Drinking Water be granted permission to conduct a hearing on S. 1100, a bill to provide that the designation of critical habitat for endangered and threatened species be required as a part of the development of recovery plans for those species, Thursday, May 27, 10:30 a.m., Hearing Room (SD-406).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON WATER AND POWER

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Water and Power of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be granted permission to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, May 27, for purposes of conducting a Water & Power Subcommittee hearing which is scheduled to begin at 2 p.m. The purpose of this hearing is to receive testimony on S. 244, a bill to authorize the construction of the Lewis and Clark Rural Water System and to authorize assistance to

the Lewis and Clark Rural Water System, Inc., for the planning and construction of the water supply system, and for other purposes; S. 623, a bill to amend Public Law 89-108 to increase authorization levels for State and Indian tribal, municipal, rural, and industrial water supplies, to meet current and future water quantity and quality needs of the Red River Valley, to deauthorize certain project features and irrigation service areas, to enhance natural resources and fish and wildlife habitat, and for other purposes; S. 769, a bill to provide a final settlement on certain debt owed by the city of Dickinson, North Dakota, for construction of the bascule gates on the Dickinson Dam; S. 1027, a bill to reauthorize the participation of the Bureau of Reclamation in the Deschutes Resources Conservancy; and H.R. 459, a bill to extend the deadline under the Federal Power Act for FERC Project No. 9401, the Mt. Hope Waterpower Project.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

NEW MILLENNIUM CLASSROOMS ACT

• Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I rise to call to the attention of the Senate a letter of endorsement given to my bill, the New Millennium Classrooms Act, by a group of 11 senior executives of Silicon Valley's leading technology and venture capital firms.

Mr. President, the New Millennium Classrooms Act, through tax-based incentives, would provide schools and companies the means by which partnerships can be created and computers, software, and related technological equipment can be brought to our schools.

Encouraging private investment and involvement, the New Millennium Classrooms Act achieves this important goal without unduly increasing Federal Government expenditures, creating yet another federal program or department and will keep control where it belongs—with the teachers, the parents, and the students.

Providing today's children with high technological equipment and software will provide them with the necessary and invaluable computer skills needed to ensure their future success and our nation's status as the technological and economic leader in the New Economy.

I ask that the letter from the Silicon Valley firms be printed in the RECORD.

The letter follows:

APRIL 15, 1999.

Hon. SPENCER ABRAHAM,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR ABRAHAM: As senior executives of the nation's leading technology companies and venture capital firms, we write to commend you for your continued support of

policies that will help to ensure our nation's technological and economic leadership. Specifically, we thank you for introducing the New Millennium Classrooms Act (S. 542), an important step toward making computers, software and the Internet available to American schoolchildren.

By relying on market-based incentives, your legislation will increase the supply of computer technology available to children in grades K-12. We are particularly supportive of enhanced provisions to encourage the donation of computers and equipment to schools that serve underprivileged students, allowing all American children the opportunity to prepare for the New Economy on equal footing. Your legislation will allow the potential of our nation's children to be fully realized in the 21st century, while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

Thank you for introducing this important legislation and for continuing your leadership on issues critical to the success of America's New Economy.

Sincerely,

Wilfred Corrigan, CEO, LSI Logic, Corp.;
Carl Feldbaum, President, Biotechnology Industry Organization; Dr. Dwight D. Decker, President, Conexant Systems; Michael Goldberg, CEO, OnCare; Floyd Kvamme, Partner, Keiner Perkins Caufield & Byers; Willem Roelandts, CEO, Xilinx; Scott Ryles, Managing Director, Merrill Lynch; Ted Smith, Chairman, FileNet; Burt McMurtry, Partner, Technology Venture Investors; Michael Rowan, CEO, Kestrel Solutions; Dr. Henry Samuli, CTO & Co-Chairman, Broadcom. •

LETTER FROM A NURSING HOME

• Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise today to share a letter I received from my constituent, Ms. Shirley Roney of Bonnie, Illinois. Ms. Roney shared with me a letter she wrote to President Clinton on behalf of her grandmother, Vaneeta Allen. This "Letter from a Nursing Home" reminds us of some of the important issues many American families face every day.

Long-term care is a serious concern for many elderly and disabled Americans. Too many of our citizens face losing everything they have worked their whole lives for, just so they can pay for nursing home care. Medicare was not designed to provide coverage for long-term care, and long-term care insurance is often unavailable due to pre-existing medical conditions, or it is out of financial reach for seniors. We must continue to explore other options to assist those like Vaneeta Allen who must rely on nursing home care.

This letter does not have all of the answers, but we will never have the answers if we lose sight of the struggles and simple dignity of people like Mrs. Allen.

I ask the letter be printed in the RECORD.

The letter follows:

MARCH 30, 1999.

DEAR PRESIDENT CLINTON: for the past four months my grandmother has been in a nursing home. This has been a very "troubling time." I have spent the past four months

learning about the way we have failed to adequately provide for those who built this country.

Actually this "Letter from a Nursing Home" came to me in the middle of a sleepless night when I was struggling to figure out some way to help my mom (grandmother) keep her home. It would have broken her heart to lose her home.

It came to me that the least I could do was express her feelings in words on paper. I was also her Power of Attorney. I wrote the letter on the 14th and before I could mail it, we, the family were called to her bedside. She died on March 18.

So I changed it from "Letter from a Nursing Home" to "Letter from Heaven" and read it as a eulogy at her funeral.

I appreciate the way you have always during your presidency tried to guarantee the rights our fathers fought for to all Americans.

SHIRLEY RONEY.

LETTER FROM A NURSING HOME

MARCH 14, 1999.

President WILLIAM J. CLINTON,
The White House,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: My name is Vaneeta Allen. I will be 93 years of age on August 11, 1999, and for most of my adult life, I have lived independently in a house I have owned.

My dad was a sharecropper. When I was a child, we never owned our own home. It was my dream to own a home when I grew up. I was the second of nine surviving children, the first girl. I wanted to be a schoolteacher but had to quit school at 13 to go to work to help support myself and my brothers and sisters. The year was 1919.

When my children were little we lived through the Great Depression and we celebrated when Franklin D. Roosevelt raised the minimum wage so we could make as much as \$1 a day in the factory.

And finally, we bought for \$5 an acre a little farm southwest of Bonnie and moved ourselves and our two surviving children into a 2-room house. We built on two bedrooms and a bathroom and a kitchen. There, we, my husband and I, spent our working years. The year was 1941.

And we sent our son and son-in-law off to war. There in that home I stood with my ears to the radio listening to the troop movements as our sons marched across Europe, afraid we would lose our sons and maybe our country. Our sons saved our country. And my son came home, but our son-in-law was nearly killed in the Philippines and spent the rest of his short life as a totally disabled veteran in and out of veterans' hospitals. Our son was killed in a car crash on April 12, 1951, at 25 years of age.

Our family bought its citizenship with blood shed on two foreign soils. But it was the price of liberty. We taught our grandchildren, half of whom were fatherless and half of whom were the children of a totally disabled father that the great price they had paid was not in vain.

We taught them about the greatness of America and how all men and women could live free.

In the early 60s, we were forced to sell our farm to the government so they could build Rend Lake there. It was the end of our farming years anyway and we needed to move away from the farm. But our grandchildren cried because they didn't want to leave that farm.

We built and moved into a home in Bonnie, a mile and a half from our farm. And there

we, my husband and I, lived together until his death in 1981, and I lived until late October 1998, when I was hospitalized after a fall and nearly died.

Now they tell me I cannot live independently. But I dream every day of going home just one more time. Now, not by choice, I am living in a nursing home. I have a nice room and I am surrounded by others who are just like me. But those of us who still are of sound mind want just to go home again.

When my husband and I retired, we thought we had adequate savings. But inflation and high medical costs have taken all of my savings. Perhaps I lived too long, but still I want to live.

Last year my total income from social security was \$6,984, but I managed to keep my home and pay my bills with that. The only other income I had was less than \$100 from renting some land. This year my monthly income from social security per month is \$582. My checkbook total is now around \$1500.

The cost of the nursing home is about \$92 per day much of which goes to medical costs, not for expensive paid help. If anything, there needs to be more money for paid help.

I have been given two options to pay—either sell my home and give up any hope of ever returning or get Public Aid Assistance. In the hope of returning home, I applied for Public Aid. Since my total income is \$582 month, out of that I must pay, to keep my home, electricity and gas \$74, water and sewer \$25, trash pick up \$15, house insurance (\$367 per year) or \$32 per month. I also have paid and want to continue to pay \$103 per month for a medicare supplement.

That leaves \$334 out of my social security to pay the nursing home. And you know what is worse of all, I am made to feel like a failure because I cannot pay out of pocket \$36,000 to \$40,000 a year for a nursing home. And there are thousands, maybe millions of me throughout this country.

Once we could borrow money on just our good names. Now our homes have become the price of our aged care. Soon I fear there will be a "For Sale" sign in my front yard and the inexpensive treasures of my life will be divided or discarded.

I take no comfort in that I am just one of many of this nation's older citizens who once put a strap around our waist, put our hands to the plow and took this great agricultural nation from a horsepowered economy to the richest most plentiful nation in the world who can put a man on the moon at will.

Must we, the elderly, who helped build this country, have to live to see ourselves stripped of our most prized possessions, our homes, our dignity, our freedom and our pride?

I know that you and Congress are about to embark on a debate on Social Security and Medicare and other issues that affect those of us who still survive though in our 90's. I hope these debates will go beyond just economics and statistics and look into the faces of those of us who make up this population. We are more than statistics. We all have a story to tell. Once we were all children. Most of us have children and grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Once you wrote in a letter to my granddaughter Shirley Roney "I have worked throughout my life to empower people who historically have been excluded from political, economic and educational opportunities. I remain committed to achieving that goal."

In that particular letter you were speaking of racial relations. I believe you when you say you have done these things. I hope that

in the remaining two years of your presidency, you will be able to finish what you have started in the areas of empowering all people who have been excluded from the opportunities for which our sons fought to guarantee to all Americans.

God Bless,

VANEETA ALLEN.●

CELLULAR TELECOMMUNICATIONS SAFETY WEEK

● Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, in recent years the advent of the wireless phone began an extraordinary advance in the cellular telecommunications industry. As a result the cellular phone has become an accessory and a necessity in the modern technological world we currently live in. It has revolutionized communication, and has helped individuals to constantly stay connected. Today, there are over an estimated 200 million wireless phone users around the world. The wireless telephone gives individuals the powerful ability to communicate—almost anywhere, anytime.

With the ability of having a cellular phone comes responsibility. As National Wireless Safety Week comes to a conclusion, we must recognize the dangers of having and using cellular telephones, especially when driving. We must also recognize the benefits of having these phones in situations where they are desperately needed. Today, there are over 98,000 emergency calls made daily by people using wireless phones—saving lives, preventing crimes and assisting in emergency situations. Furthermore, according to a recent government study, decreasing notification time when accidents occurs saves lives—a wireless phone is a tool to reduce such a time.

The Cellular Telecommunications Industry Association (CTIA) is the international organization of the wireless communications industry for wireless carriers and manufactures. It is also the coordinator of Wireless Safety Week, and promotes using phones to summon assistance in emergency situations to save lives. It also promotes the concept that when driving a car, safety is one's first priority. The CTIA has six simple rules to driving safely while using a wireless phone, including:

Safe driving is one's first responsibility. Always buckle up; keep your hands on the wheel and your eyes on the road.

Make sure that one's phone is positioned where is easy to see and easy to reach. Be familiar with the operation of one's phone so that one is comfortable using it on the road.

Use the speed dialing feature to program-in frequently called numbers. Then one is able to make a call by touching only one or two buttons. Most phones will store up to 99 numbers.

When dialing manually without using the speed dialing feature first, dial only when stopped. If one cannot stop,